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MARSHALLING THE EVIDENCE OF GOVERNANCE CONTRIBUTIONS TO HEALTH SYSTEM PERFORMANCE AND HEALTH OUTCOMES

Workshop September 14th 2016

Summary Report

Final draft October 14, 2016

Table of Contents

Background and Workshop Objectives..... 3

Workshop Results..... 4

Annex 1 : Workshop Agenda 9

Annex 2: Participant List..... 11

Background

There is a lack of evidence and understanding of the dynamics of interventions and contexts in which improved health system governance can contribute to improved health outcomes. As donors and governments increase their emphasis on improving the accountability and transparency of health systems, there is an ever increasing need for this evidence. Governance interventions could then more effectively contribute to measurable improvements in health outcomes such as reduction in maternal or child mortality, or increased coverage of HIV/AIDS treatment.

On September 14, 2016 the USAID Health Finance and Governance Project (HFG) supported the USAID Office of Health Systems (OHS) and WHO to co-sponsor a workshop to launch a major initiative to marshal the evidence of how health governance contributes to health system performance and ultimately health outcomes. The marshaling of evidence activity will culminate in a high level international event in June 2017 to share knowledge and foster dialogue between donors, researchers, health governance practitioners, and policy makers.

The event brings together important USAID and WHO initiatives to elevate the importance of health governance. The HFG workshop included 35 health and governance professionals from across USAID (OHS, the Center of Excellence for Democracy, Rights and Governance, and the Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment), the WHO, World Bank, academic partners, and implementing partners to launch the marshaling the evidence effort. See Annex 2 for the List of Participants.

Workshop Objectives

1. Share knowledge about ongoing efforts to generate evidence of health governance contributions to health system performance and health outcomes
2. Kick off technical efforts through the establishment of four thematic working groups (TWGs). The TWG will conduct reviews of scientific evidence and tacit knowledge.
3. Discuss the technical focus and objectives of the June 2017 high level event to share findings of the marshaling the evidence efforts.

Workshop Results

Ongoing Evidence Review Activities

Both USAID and WHO presented their ongoing efforts to generate and/or review evidence on the importance of health governance. In addition to these two major efforts, the workshop identified several other important initiatives relevant to the HFG Marshaling the Evidence activity. The workshop participants noted that many of these initiatives have already conducted literature reviews that may be leveraged for TWG work.

Four key evidence generation or collection activities were identified of relevance to the TWGs:

- HFG conducted a literature review of the impact of interventions across all six health system building blocks to support OHS and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) strengthening of EQUIST a tool for equitable and cost-effective health decision making.
- Results 4 Development is currently leading a research project with the Kennedy School to improve community-led transparency in improving health outcomes, identifying what those mechanisms are and not just 'wait and see' if it works or not.
- The Future Health Systems project is evaluating citizen 'score card' approaches in Uganda and Bangladesh.
- DAI has been working on documentation of the evidence on mobilizing tax revenues at national and subnational levels (eg Nigeria) that contribute to major resources being channeled to the health sector.
- WHO has recently started a new program of work on the importance of regulation and the law for improving public health, including a review of the evidence base for this.
- John Hopkins has been involved for some time in various global and national initiatives aimed at assessing the evidence behind using research and health system intelligence to influence health policy making.
- The World Bank has a growing body of knowledge around different aspects of health governance, for policy on specific systems such as workforce, financing and information systems, as well as governance of the health system as a whole. It also has built up knowledge in cross-sectoral aspects of governance, such as citizen accountability and PFM.

Thematic Working Groups

To prepare the technical content for the June 2017 event, OHS, WHO and HFG launched four Thematic Working Groups. The TWGs are responsible for consolidating evidence from low and middle income countries and presenting at the event. Each TWG has Co-chairs responsible for guiding the group to organize and package the research and field practice on their theme. The following themes and associated TWGs were established during the workshop:

Public Financial Management (PFM)

PFM TWG Co-chairs: Karima Saleh, Senior Economist – Health, Nutrition & Population, World Bank; Eunice Heredia-Ortiz, Senior PFM Advisor, DAI

Policy and Regulation

Policy and Regulation TWG Co-Chairs: Agnès Soucat, Director, WHO Health System Governance and Finance Department; Suneeta Sharma, Project Director, USAID HP+

Health System Intelligence

Health System Information and Intelligence TWG Co-Chairs: Jodi Charles, Senior Health Systems Advisor, USAID/OHS; Sara Bennet, Professor, JHSPH

Accountability

Accountability TWG Co-Chairs: David Jacobstein, DCHA/DRG Cross-Sectoral Programs Team, USAID; Lola Dare, President, CHESTRAD International

During the discussion of the four thematic areas, workshop participants raised four major points:

- 1. The justification for the four themes?** While there was no objection to the four themes proposed by USAID, WHO and HFG, participants noted the need that a stronger justification for why these themes were selected and not others. Participants noted that there may be several possible justifications – themes that offer the potential for identifying evidence, themes that are relevant to donor and policy maker priorities, etc. – but as we move forward towards the 2017 event, the justification must be clear.

In advance of the completion and publication of the four systemic reviews and in preparing for the 2017 event, HFG will need to draft a framing document that clearly articulates the rationale behind the selection of the four themes.

- 2. Broad versus Narrow Interpretations of the thematic areas.** Participants noted there were different approaches to interpreting the four thematic areas. For example public financial management could be more broadly defined as public sector management, or with a narrower focus on subsets of financial management, such as domestic resource mobilization. The accountability thematic area was also noted as covering substantial ground.

The TWG co-chairs will define the focus area of their thematic areas based on their expertise and in consultation with other TWG members. The secretariat will support the TWGs to pursue narrow rather than broad definitions.

- 3. Managing the overlap among thematic areas.** The thematic areas have clear areas of overlap. For example, audit functions may be associated both with the PFM theme as well as the accountability theme, while the existence of strong regulatory bodies may fit both within the policy and regulation and the accountability themes. Participants noted the potential for multiple groups citing the same evidence.

A secretariat comprised of HFG and WHO staff will serve to coordinate the TWGs and foster collaboration between them (see Next Steps, below). A key function of the secretariat is to limit the overlap between TWGs.

- 4. The need for clear guidance on the TWG product.** Participants noted that the task of reviewing the scientific evidence and tacit knowledge is different across the four thematic areas. Providing clear guidance in the form of an outline, standards for the systematic review, and definition of the audience is necessary to ensure that the outputs are consistent.

HFG will provide clear guidance to the TWG co-chairs on the structure and content of the final papers.

During the HFG workshop, participants split into four groups and led by the TWG co-chairs began discussions about the other institutions and organizations. Appendix 3 presents the initial thinking of the four groups.

Ideas for 2017 Event

The workshop concluded with an activity to solicit ideas from the participants on what the June 2017 high level event might accomplish. The following summarizes some of the major categories of responses.

Evidence for best fit governance interventions

- Evidence-based guidance on best ways in improving governance as a means to achieve UHC.
- Policy makers & donors understand contributions of health governance to achieving a range of desired health results.
- Make clear what we know what works at the programming level.
- Clarify the Value-Added aspects of Health Governance.
- Galvanize a more consolidated vision of health governance; synthesize its complex areas into more discrete themes, and make context-specific guidance on evidence of governance interactions.

A unified research agenda

- Provide a research agenda for HSS & governance including a list of knowledge gaps, priorities for research, and support needed for strengthening governance in health systems.
- Clarify whether health governance mean the same thing in low, middle, and high-income countries? What can we learn and apply across them all?
- Gaps in analyses need to be identified within the context of a future policy research agenda.

Momentum for future investments in health governance

- Country stakeholders demand/ask for specific health governance interventions take the initiative to implement some health governance improvements on their own.
- A collective ‘a ha!’ moment when our target audience – policy makers, practitioners, and donors understand what health governance can do, why it should be done, and where to start.
- An understanding of the pathway from accountability (supply and demand) to good governance in global health at the global, regional, and country level.

Greater understanding and awareness of what health governance means for health system performance and health outcomes

- Bringing together/convening a variety of actors to reflect on the state of evidence around governance in the health sector.
- Role and value of governance for improving health outcomes, reducing poverty, and contributing to economic development.
- Sharing what we know including making sure people understand how hard good governance is to achieve.

Next Steps

The workshop identified several important next steps:

1. **Provide definition of TWG end product and associated guidance on review approach and standards.** HFG will develop a clear definition of the end product, timelines and guidance to co-chairs on the structure and content of the final papers.
2. **Better explain the objectives of the 2017 event.** HFG will more clearly define the 2017 event around the following objectives: The purpose of the event is to increase awareness and understanding of the evidence of what works and why in how governance contributes to health system performance, and how the field of health governance is evolving at the country level. The event will provide a forum for health policy practitioners, researchers and policy advisors to present findings, review results, introduce new approaches, and discuss new partnerships for health governance activities.
3. **Operationalize the Marshalling the Evidence Secretariat.** The Secretariat will support the individual TWGs and coordinate work across the thematic areas. A small group of HFG, USAID and WHO advisors will coordinate the TWG efforts. The coordination group includes: HFG – Bob Fryatt, Catherine Connor, Jeremy Kanthor, Hawa Barry, Adam Koon; USAID – Jodi Charles; and WHO – Gerard Schmets, Maryam Bigdeli. This TWG Coordination function will help to promote collaboration between TWGs, particularly in areas where TWGs may overlap, and oversee the preparation of any additional background paper(s) required to synthesize and communicate the main findings of the TWG papers and address how the overall findings will be taken forward.

The TWG Coordination will also provide quality oversight of deliverables and the HFG project provides research and analytic support to the TWGs as required.

ANNEX I - Workshop Agenda

Marshalling the Evidence for Governance

Technical Kick Off Event

September 14, 2016

Global Health Fellows Program II
Public Health Institute
1201 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Suite 200 – Africa Room
Washington, DC 20004

Agenda

Event Objectives:

- Share knowledge about ongoing Evidence Generation Efforts
- Discuss technical focus for the 2017 high level event
- Establish TWGs and kick off technical efforts

I. Introductory Remarks – 9:00 – 9:15

Irene Koek, Deputy Assistant Administrator. Bureau for Global Health, USAID

II. Welcome and Introductions – 9:15 – 9:45

Jodi Charles, Senior Health Systems Advisor, USAID/OHS

Agnes Soucat, Director, WHO Health System Governance and Finance Department

III. Understanding the link between Governance and Health – 9:45 – 10:45

Presentation by Sara Bennett, Professor, JHSPH introducing conceptual framework and discussion of what marshalling the evidence initiative and high level 2017 event can accomplish.

Q&A

Participatory Activity: What do we hope a high level event in 2017 can accomplish for increasing understanding of the importance of health governance? Each table will generate ideas to share with plenary.

BREAK – 10:45 – 11:00

Presentation of ongoing Evidence Generation Initiatives – 11:00 – 12:30

USAID (OHS and DRG) and WHO present ongoing evidence generation initiatives.

Moderator: Catherine Connor, Deputy Project Director, HFG

Joe Naimoli, Health Systems Research Adviser, USAID/OHS

Laura Ahearn, Senior Learning Advisor, USAID/DRG

Agnes Soucat, Director, HGF, WHO

Q&A

Participatory Activity: What other major efforts to generate evidence on the impact of health governance are we aware of? The plenary will share complementary input.

LUNCH – 12:30 – 1:30

IV. Discussion of Thematic working group topic areas – 1:30 – 2:30

Review of the proposed thematic working groups (PFM, Policy and Regulation, Health System Intelligence, Accountability) definition.

Q&A

Moderators: Gerard Schmets, Coordinator, WHO HGF and Jeremy Kanthor, Governance Lead, HFG

V. Identification of TWG composition, leadership, TOR and Work Plan Development – 2:30 – 3:30

Introduction of TWG Co-chairs and review of TWG Terms of References followed by breakout sessions led by co-chairs to launch TWGs.

Moderators: Bob Fryatt, Project Director HFG and Maryam Bigdeli, Health Systems Advisor, WHO HGF

BREAK – 3:30 – 3:45

VI. Next Steps – Identification of a clear coordinating strategy and mechanism for overall 2017 meeting planning – 3:45 – 4:30

Discuss a coordinating mechanism and strategy for monitoring and supporting the continuous progress of the TWGs efforts and next steps in design of 2017 event.

Moderators: Jodi Charles, USAID/OHS and Bob Fryatt, HFG

VII. Concluding Remarks

ANNEX 2: Participant List

Name	Organization
Michael Adelhardt	World Bank
Susan Ahearn	USAID
Sara Bennett	John Hopkins
Maryam Bigdeli	WHO
Derick Brinkerhoff	RTI
Jodi Charles	USAID
Catherine Connor	HFG
Bob Emrey	USAID
Jim Fremming	Social Impact
Lola Dare	CHESTRAD International
Bob Fryatt	HFG
Helene Grandvoinet	USAID
Eunice Heredia-Ortiz	DAI
David Jacobstein	USAID
Jeremy Kanthor	DAI
Jerry La Forgia	ACESO Global
Jawara Lumumba	TRG
Caroline Ly	USAID
Margaret Reeves	ACESO Global
Steven Rozner	USAID
Karima Saleh	World Bank
Gerard Schmets	WHO
Suneeta Sharma	Futures
Mahesh Shukla	MSH
Agnes Soucat	WHO
Courtney Tolmie	USAID